



VOLUNTEER GUIDE

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**General, United States Army
1983**

Introduction/History

Today's Army leadership recognizes family readiness as inseparable from general military preparedness. More service members have families than ever before, these include increasing numbers of single-parent families and families in which both the husband and wife are service members. Families are not only those associated to us through marriage...we have mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, cousins and significant others of the service members. Service members who know their families are being well taken care of perform better under stress of separation for training and combat. Families whose needs are met during deployment will be in a better position to welcome and support their returning service members.

“Man has two supreme loyalties – to country and to family... So long as their families are safe, they will defend their country, believing that by their sacrifice they are safeguarding their families also. But even the bonds of patriotism, discipline, and comradeship are loosened when the family itself is threatened.”

**William Tecumseh Sherman
General, United States Army
1864**

As National Guard and Reserve forces deploy for training, national disasters, peacekeeping missions, operations other than war (OOTWA), and combat, it is imperative deploying service members know their families are cared for. The family at “home station” must have a support chain to assist them in the event of an emergency. Families must be able to sustain while their loved ones serve their country, this includes dealing with legal issues, unit information/updates, emergency support (chaplain, Red Cross and other support units) and other necessary information.

The State Family Program Office was tasked to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to assist unit family readiness groups in their preparation for deployment (before, during and after the action). The established SOP is only a guideline to assist the family readiness groups in their effort to maintain/sustain while their loved-one is away from home. This guideline will assist the Family Readiness Group in setting up a Basic Unit Family Program, moving into an Enhanced Unit Family Program, and sustaining as a Progressive Unit Family Program.

“A partnership exists between the Army and Army families. The Army’s unique missions, concept of service, and lifestyle of its members – all affect the nature of this partnership, the Army remains committed to assuring adequate support to families in order to promote wellness, to develop a sense of community, and to strengthen the mutually reinforcing bonds between the Army and its families.”

John A. Wickham, Jr.

The first step in starting/enhancing the Family Readiness program is to select individual(s) committed to the Family Readiness program, to the unit, and the families being assisted. Without this commitment the Family Readiness program might never evolve to the Progressive Unit Family Program which should be the unit’s goal. The level of commitment varies depending on the size of the unit and its mission.

During Operation Dessert Storm over 600 Family Assistance Centers (FAC) were established and over one million requests for service/assistance were received. These FACs were established throughout the country and offered many types of support, it was easy to see how families united in the time of need. Even with this success, many units were not adequately prepared for its service members to deploy from home station. Families suffered which caused additional stress for service members. Having an established support plan where families are cared for eliminates some of the stress.

To be fully prepared for the next deployment, family readiness groups need to take immediate action. Family readiness groups need to take inventory of where their unit is operating and what steps need to be taken to improve their standing. Read this SOP and apply the ideas to your organization, remember these are only guidelines you can meet and exceed them with committed participation.

OPERATION READY FAMILIES OVERVIEW

Operation Ready Families was developed to focus vision and energy on Family Program activities that enhance communication, empower volunteers, and develop resources to improve Total Guard Family wellness and readiness.

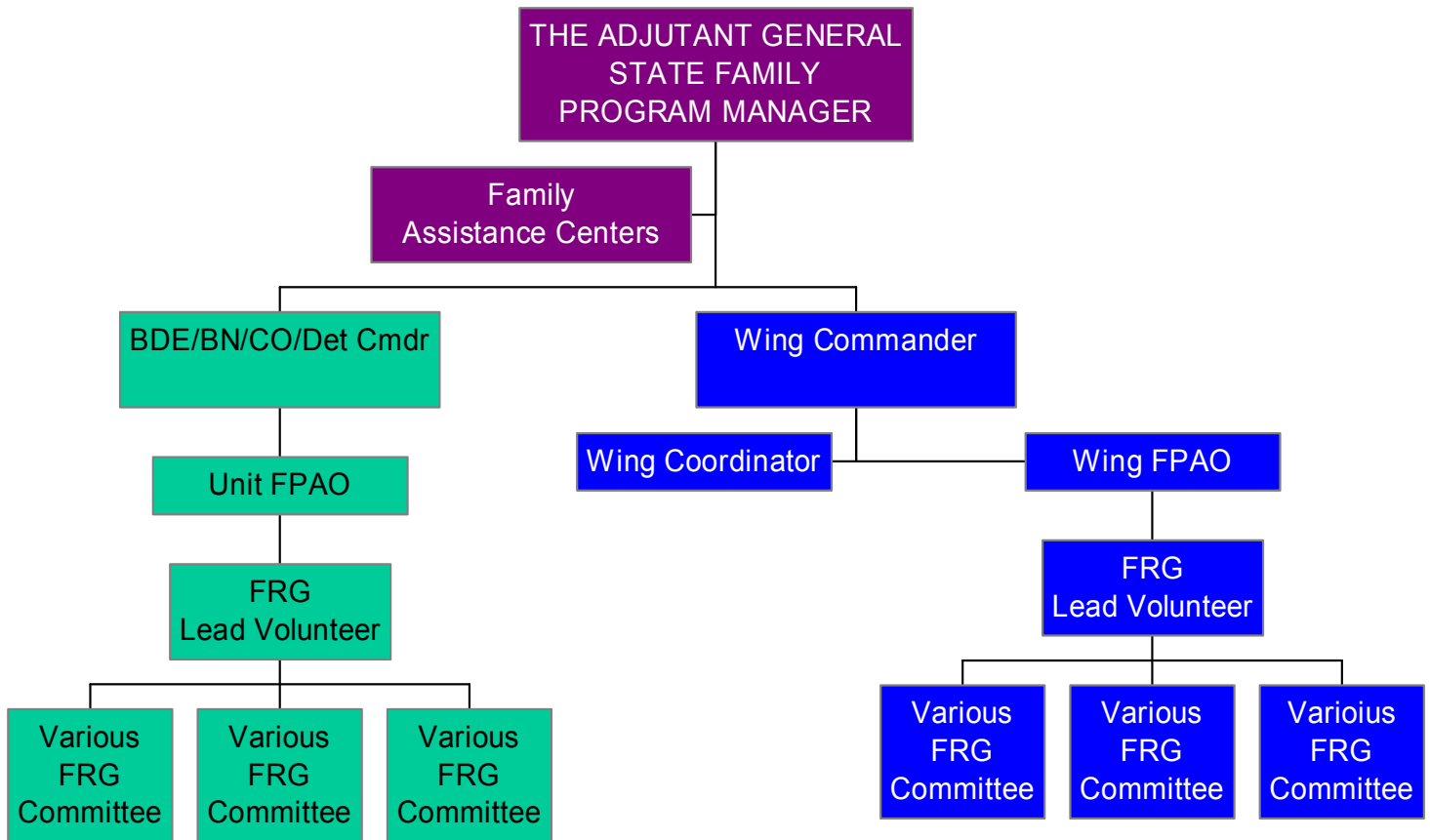
The Operation Ready Families Mission Statement is:

The Michigan National Guard Operation Ready Families provides ready families to the State and Nation in support of its Guard members and Guard missions. We accomplish this by:

- ✓ Supporting the goals of the National Guard Bureau and the Michigan National Guard.
- ✓ Promoting the inherent partnership in which the Family and Military participate.
- ✓ Ensuring that Quality of Life be maintained for our Guard Families during times of separation.
- ✓ Establishing a basic foundation of training and education that encourages an informed and knowledgeable Guard Family.
- ✓ Creating and providing an accessible resource pool for Guard members and their families.
- ✓ Inform and educate community leaders, school counselors and employees to aid Guard Families during deployments.
- ✓ Through implementation of a multifaceted program that incorporates the above goals, we confirm the intrinsic value of the Family to the Michigan National Guard.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure depends on the size and activity of the unit. The different committees will depend on need and participation within the unit. The family volunteer official representative passes the information to the unit commander/1SG to ensure all activities are performed within the scope of JFHQ Regulation 608-2. When questions arise about unit family program activities they will be directed to the State Family Program Office. Below is an example of how the structure should flow



Family Program Volunteer Guide

I. Where do we begin?

1. What is a Family Readiness Group (FRG)?

A family readiness group is an officially sanctioned organization of family members (spouse, children, parents, brother/sister, boyfriend/girlfriend, retirees, significant others of the unit's officers) and enlisted personnel. It can include community leaders and employers who support the Guard. It uses volunteers to provide information and comprise a support network for families and unit members during their association with the Michigan National Guard, especially during times of separation.

The family program within our state includes both Air and Army National Guard members. Family readiness groups therefore can include representatives of both service groups, and are encouraged to work at joint ventures wherever possible.

The Family Readiness Group can also include family members of service members on active duty from other branches of the military.

2. How do you start a Family Readiness Group?

STEP ONE – The Commander appoints a unit member as the Family Program Action Officer (FPAO)

STEP TWO – The Commander addresses the unit and announces the need for a family readiness group, encouraging unit members to bring their family members to a designated time and place for a meeting.

STEP THREE – The FPAO identifies those family members who might be interested in helping to start a FRG, and works with them to:

- Develop a mailing announcement/invitation to the Commanders meeting.
- Make some phone call contacts with unit members and family members to invite and encourage participation.
- Make some direct personal contacts to invite and encourage participation.
- Works with the State Family Program Coordinator for resources and initial FRG training.

STEP FOUR – The FPPO reserves a meeting room for the Commanders meeting.

- The FPAO arranges for an adequate number of chairs, tables, and other furnishings, as needed, within the meeting room.
- The FPAO assures that the meeting room is cleaned, chairs and tables set in place, and all support supplies are available (overhead projector; VCR/TV etc.).

- The FPAO draws from the supply system, pens or pencils; writing pads; etc. that will be needed for the meeting.
- The FPAO invites unit members and volunteers to decorate the meeting room with posters, balloons, streamers etc.
- The FPAO works with unit members and family members to prepare informational signs or posters that will:
 - Welcome the unit members and their family members as they arrive for the meeting.
 - Provide clear directions to the room where the meeting will be held.
 - Identify the location of the restrooms
 - Daycare for large meetings
- The FPAO invites a few people to greet the unit members and the family members as they arrive for the meeting.
- The Commander prepares his briefing for the people at the time and place he/she has designated.

STEP FIVE – On the designated day, before the unit members and family members arrive:

- The FPAO assures that the meeting room is ready.
- The FPAO checks with all volunteers that have been enlisted to help with the meeting to ensure that everyone knows what to do and when.
- The FPAO introduces the Commander.
- The Commander presents his/her briefing
 - The need for family readiness, as an aspect of member/unit readiness.
 - Encouraging the formation of a FRG.
 - Identifying mobilization as associated with drill weekend, annual training, state activation, schools, TDY's etc.
 - Outlines the leadership structure of the FRG (President/Lead Coordinator, Vice-President/Assistant Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, or Board Members) and encourages the volunteers to elect their leaders at the next meeting.
 - Volunteer training opportunities are made possible through the office of the State Family Program Coordinator.
- The Commander leaves time for questions.

- The Commander invites consensus on the timing and location of the next meeting, and sets the date, time and place.
- The Commander invites the group to share in the snacks and beverages provided for them.
- The Commander, FPAO, and first-up volunteers intentionally take the time to visit with unit members and family members to try to communicate a genuine sense of caring.
- When the meeting is over, the FPAO, with the help of unit members and/or first-up family member volunteers, cleans up the meeting room.

STEP SIX – In anticipation of the second meeting, the FPAO essentially repeats steps three and four.

STEP SEVEN - At the second meeting:

- The Commander or the FPAO leads an “ice-breaker” and encourages the participants to have fun and get to know one another.
- The Commander and/or FPAO facilitate the process of electing FRG leaders.
- The Commander informs the group that a memorandum of appointment for FRG leaders will be published.
- The Commander invites the newly elected/appointed leadership to step forward and process the decision about the next meeting, date, time and place.
- The date, time and place for the next meeting are set.
- Participants are invited to share in snack and beverages.

STEP EIGHT – The FPAO and the newly elected leadership work together to essentially repeat steps three and four.

STEP NINE – On the day of the scheduled meeting:

- The commander may or may not attend. If the Commander attends, he/she should try to take less of a role in the meeting.
- The FPAO will have coordinated with the FRG President/Lead Coordinator for support in arranging the reservation of a meeting room and making available supplies or materials.
- The lead volunteer will conduct the meeting and work with the FRG participants to establish:
 - Goals for readiness programming.

- FRG officer job descriptions.
- Support the treasurer in understanding how to apply for an IRS employee's identification number, and thus be able to open a non-interest bearing checking account under the official name of the unit FRG.
- Enlist the support of volunteers in getting out the word of encouragement and personal invitation for other family members to become involved in the FRG.
- Establish one or two readiness issues as needs and goals to accomplish (i.e. dependent ID cards, awareness of SGLI benefit, TRICARE or Dental Benefits, etc.) set the date, time and place for the next meeting.

***** The FRG will likely take hold from this time forward.....**

- With continued command emphasis and support within the unit.
- With effective FPAO interaction and support with and for the leaders and other volunteers.
- With the idea and experience of teamwork that assures a sense of welcome and inclusion of family members within the unit.
- With command and unit recognition and commendations to reflect appreciation for the accomplishments of the volunteers

3. Who can participate in a FRG?

- Enlisted and officer service members, family members, friends, neighbors, significant others, community leaders, employers who support the Guard, family members of Navy, Army, Marines, Air Force (Active or Reserve), and retired service members who live in the community where the Guard unit is located. Virtually anyone who is interested in supporting readiness for service member family members can participate in a FRG.

4. Who can hold an official volunteer position?

- Family members (spouses, children, parents, siblings, or extended family members) of currently assigned unit members.
- Retirees and family members of retirees

Official volunteers are those who stand the opportunity to become voting members of FRG events/activities. Although we encourage community member involvement, we do not want there to become a situation where the majority of voting members affiliated with a unit's FRG exceed the family connected members. An FRG is a family-oriented organization that supports and represents the family perspective with regard to mission tasking, events, and activities whereby the family ultimately is impacted directly. Retirees are part of the 'official volunteers' because although they may no longer be 'assigned' to a particular unit, they continue to have a strong connection to that unit and it's

members through loyal service affiliation and comrade status. **Military members cannot hold 'official volunteer' positions as they are subject to deployment** and therefore their vacancy from official FRG responsibility would negatively impact ongoing activities/events and program options for the FRG.

5. What does a FRG do?

- Family readiness group activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Arrange for “family member ID card” days. For family members to be ready for time of separation due to military service (mobilization) it is essential that they have a family member ID card.
 - Establish a “phone tree”. Family members agree to form a link in a chain of concern, whereby each family member calls on other family members to pass on essential information.
 - Develop a new family orientation sponsorship program to welcome and provide a general overview to new family members on the FRG and the unit’s mission as it will impact on them.
 - Publish a unit family readiness newsletter for unit members and family members that pass on information concerning family members and the military.
 - Provide training in a variety of areas that will enhance family member readiness (i.e. communication, family budget/finance management, parenting, understanding family member benefits, independent living strategies, etc.).
 - Assist the Commander in planning and implementing unit family day briefings and activities (i.e. open house at the armory, visit your unit member during drill weekend and learn about their job, etc.).
 - Plan sessions to inform and enhance community support and participation.
 - Plan and implement fund raising activities.
 - Plan and develop programs for children of the youth mentorship.
 - Set up a family assistance program. Assure that caring responses are consistent and equitable for all unit members and their family members.
 - Plan to attend and support the volunteer training events provided by the State Family Program Coordinator.

- Plan programs that will introduce family members to other family members (Getting to know you”) and thereby enhance family member rapport and potential support during times of mobilization.
- Plan healthy activities for family enjoyment.
- Coordinate a “health fair” for family members.

6. What a FRG does not do?

- A FRG never accepts the title of “ladies group, “wives club”, or “women’s auxiliary”, because the FRG includes male spouses of female unit members, male/female family members of single members, male/female retiree members and the FRG can never limit participation by title/name or activity.
- A FRG does not surrender its reason for being (“family member readiness”) to another goal of religious, political, psychological, or other nature.
- A FRG is not a setting for the sales or promotion of the personal business interests.
- A FRG is not responsible for the cooking of meals during drills for times of annual training.
- A FRG is not authorized to make personal loans out of FRG fund accounts.
- A FRG does not accept donations in excess of \$1,000, unless earmarked for a specific project/activity/program that benefits the entire FRG body.
- A FRG functions without reference to rank or position of unit members.

Family Program Volunteer Guide

II. Who does what?

1. Job descriptions for FRG volunteers. (Appendix B Sample Job Description))

a. President/Lead Coordinator:

- Conduct FRG meetings & work with volunteers.
- Work with the unit FPAO.
- Work with regional FAC's.
- Communicate with the Commander when necessary.
- Communicate with the State Family Program Coordinator, concerning volunteer training, FRG volunteer names and addresses, and FRG functioning overall.
- Develop effective teamwork with the vice-president and other FRG officers/official volunteers.
- Ensure that FRG programming focuses on family member readiness.
- Ensure that all fund raising efforts are in accordance with state and federal guidelines, has command approval and that appropriate counting and accounting procedures are used as money is received.{**see treasurers guidelines**}

b. Vice-President/Assistant Coordinator:

- Alternate with the President/Lead Coordinator when necessary or planned for, to provide leadership for FRG meetings.
- Develop a teamwork relationship with the President/Lead Coordinator, other FRG leaders and official volunteers, to effectively serve the needs of the FRG.
- Ensure that the FRG programming focuses on family member readiness.
- Supports the Commanders and FRG President/Lead Coordinator's program objectives and works to communicate party-line views throughout entire FRG.

c. Secretary:

- Take notes and develop minutes for FRG meetings.

- Send mailings to FRG membership and others as needed.
- Participate in the development and publication of a unit FRG newsletter.
- Keep FRG minutes on file for records.
- Provide a history of the unit FRG.
- Prepares Quarterly Reports required to be submitted to SFPC.
- Provide administrative support to the FRG.

d. Treasurer/Fiscal Official Volunteer:

- **Apply for IRS employer identification number** using IRS Form SS-4 on line or call 1-800-829-4933 (be sure to have the pertinent SS-4 information on hand if you call).
- Open a **non-interest-bearing checking account**.
- Ensure that the **balance of the account does not exceed \$1,000** unless the Commander provides written approval for an exceptional program or event that is scheduled to occur within the next 6 months. For balances to exceed the \$1,000 limit for more than 6 months, the treasurer prepares a request through the Commander to the State Family Program Office for approval.
- Ensure that all **debt** incurred by the FRG is **paid in a timely fashion**.
- Submit bills for payment to the FRG for approval.
- Keep accurate accounting of FRG funds.
- Keep FRG financial accounting on a **fiscal year** basis, **1 October to 30 September**.
- Prepare **quarterly reports** (at a minimum) for the Commander and the FRG. **(Appendix C, Sample Report)**
- Prepare an **annual report** and prepare the account for an **annual audit NLT 1 November**.
- Ensure that the **FRG does not assume liabilities which exceed its assets**.
- Submit all account records, once a year (usually, early November), for **audit**.

e. FRG/Official Volunteer membership: (Appendix D, Volunteer Agreement)

- Demonstrate a commitment to the program of **readiness for families** of Guard members.
- Support and assist the membership in accomplishing projects and programs that will enhance the role of the FRG.
- **Demonstrate a willingness to resolve conflicts** when they arise, in a manner that will demonstrate **respect for all FRG members**.
- Work at affirming the FRG program by inviting other family members to join.
- Work with fellow volunteers to assure that FRG interaction is not based upon rank.

f. Family Program Action Officer (FPAO):

- Serves as the liaison between the volunteers of the FRG and the Commander.
- Ensures the FRG operates within the policies, procedures and regulatory guidance.
- Provides an understanding to the volunteers with regard to military issues, concerns, protocol, mission requirements, etc.
- Assists the FRG in the conducting of its meetings and ensures cooperation by military members with providing necessary information for telephone trees, chain of concerns, etc.
- Supports the FRG with the use of facility resources, i.e. meeting space, office space, filing cabinet space, mailings, and general office material/equipment as needed.

g. Unit Commander:

The unit commander is the person responsible for everything that takes place within a unit and the unit's family program. It is their responsibility to ensure that all of their service members are trained and prepared to do their duty in defense of our state and country as needed in times of peace and crisis. The Commander sets the tone, parameters and approves all events of the Family Readiness Group (FRG). A major concern for many service members that become deployed is the care and well-being of their families. In order to ensure that service members can be confident that their families are taken care of in their absence the unit has a Family Readiness Group. FRGs are established in times of peace to prepare families for times of separation, whether it is for a weekend or a year long deployment.

h. Family Assistance Centers (FACs): (Appendix E, Current State FAC's)

Family Assistance Centers have been opened throughout the state in support of the high number of deployments. The state website is a great source of information on each FAC location and contact information. FACs are set up geographically and designed to assist not only National Guard dependents, but also active duty and other service component dependents living in the area. FACs are generally operated by family members and/or military retirees, and staffed by volunteers. They offer a local source for families to contact for information on benefits, insurance, legal issues, financial issues and family problems.

i. State Family Program Coordinator (SFPC):

The State Family Program Coordinator receives information from the highest levels of civilian and military command and acts as a liaison with Federal agencies that provide services or can make an impact on National Guard families.

2. How to conduct a family readiness group meeting?

A FRG meeting, like all other meetings, will be more productive with prior planning and preparation.

(a) Prior Planning:

1. **Setting the date, time and place** for the next FRG meeting can work best as a priority agenda item for each meeting. This date should be made a month in advance so it can be included in the monthly newsletter. Be intentional about scheduling dates as a courtesy for each participant's time availability.
2. The unit FPAO can reserve rooms within the unit facility. **Scheduling ahead** is important so the Commanders and key unit staff can support the FRG without impacting unit training and other facility usage. Using a room in the unit facility can allow the unit FPAO to support the FRG by assuring that the room is cleaned and set with chairs, tables, etc. FRG elected body may choose to arrange reservations at other locations. Whatever community site is chosen should be free of political or religious endorsement or influence.
3. **Beverages and snacks**, if preferred, can be arranged on a rotating basis with teams of volunteer family members established as committees. The FPAO, if the unit facility is used, may be able to arrange the use of the kitchen facilities (where available). FRG funds should be used to support meeting refreshments.
4. **Child/Adult/Elder Care:** The primary concern is for the safety and well being of family members who require care. Authorized care providers can be listed for family members to select the one they prefer. To avoid liability issues, the FRG must not endorse a particular care provider. Care costs may be reimbursed by unit FRG funds or if requested and approved in advance, through the state NAF (non-Appropriated Fund), managed at the State Family Program Office. Reimbursement is based upon allowable rates and availability of funds. An

official care provider receipt must accompany requests for reimbursement. Adequate care for dependent family members can allow volunteers to feel free to focus on the FRG business at hand.

5. **Meeting Supplies:** FRG leadership can coordinate with the unit FPAO for supplies such as pens, writing pads, newsprint, markers, audio-visual equipment, VCR/TV, overhead projector, PowerPoint, LCD projection, etc.

6. **Research, Preparation or Background Work:**

(a.) Meetings with the unit FPAO, the Commander, or a volunteer committee, may be needed prior to and in support of the FRG meeting.

(b.) Research support through community resources, unit contacts, the State Family Program office, etc. can strengthen the information to be shared at the FRG meeting.

(c.) Notes, posters, transparencies, etc. to enhance program presentation.

(d.) Special speakers; videos; etc. need to be secured in advance.

(e.) The FPAO and FRG officers might choose to arrive early enough, before the meeting begins, to discuss any last minute details.

7. **Meeting Agenda:** A clearly developed concise agenda to facilitate a reasonably focused and time effective meeting.

(b.) Formal Business Meeting:

(1.) The President/Lead Coordinator or Vice-President/Assistant Coordinator calls the meeting to order and presents the agenda.

(2.) Set the date, time, and place for the next FRG meeting.

(3.) Approve minutes of previous meeting.

(4.) Receive and approve treasurer's report. Approve treasurer's paying new bills.

(5.) Review old business and take action.

(6.) Review new business and vote upon it.

(7.) Motion to dismiss and time for informal visit.

“Rules of Thumb”

- The number of members present for any meeting constitutes a **“quorum”** (a sufficient number to affect a valid/legal vote).

- **Informal** matters dealt with **informally**.
- **Formal** call for a motion, a second, and a majority vote. In the event of a tie, the President's/Lead Coordinator's vote may be the tie-breaker; the matter may be deferred to a later time; or it may be referred to the Commander for a decision.

(c.) Informal or topical meeting:

- (1.) President/Lead Coordinator, Vice-President/Assistant Coordinator, or a designee introduces the speaker or program.
- (2.) The program is presented.
- (3.) Time for questions or discussion.
- (4.) Closing with snacks and beverages.

3. What is the Commanders memorandum for FRG?

- A FRG needs to be **officially** authorized or **sanctioned** for its volunteers to be legally recognized by the government.
- **The Commander appoints** the unit Family Program Action Officer and all elected FRG officers elected. **The Commander appointment ties to sanctioning, not to taking away the volunteers right or ability to elect leadership.**
- In an extreme "worst case" situation (i.e. the serious mismanagement of FRG funds) **the Commander is responsible** to resolve matters and may have to call for the resignation of or dismiss a FRG officer.
- This memorandum is a military memorandum on unit letterhead appointing these official positions within the unit FRG.

Family Program Volunteer Guide

III. How do we recruit & retain Volunteers?

1. What is recruitment?

The definition of recruitment is – “Raising or strengthening by enlisting personnel”. (Webster’s New World Dictionary)

Recruitment is the process of seeking volunteers who want to help meet the needs of a FRG, volunteers who desire to help educate the Guard member and family members to enhance and improve the quality of life.

Before you can recruit, you must have a clearly defined goal and plan of action, understandable to others. Volunteers are human and require information about what you wish them to do. The following criteria should be available for them:

- Clearly stated plan of action and measurable objectives.
- Clearly written and understandable job descriptions.
- Honest work to do.
- Reporting methods which are logical and easy to follow.
- Assessment methods based on the work to be done.
- Evaluation processes to reward good work and positively redirect inadequate work.
- A positive attitude by the commander and senior volunteer that exhibits belief in volunteers, open communications, desire for honest feedback, effective delegation, respect for differences, and fairness and integrity.

2. How do we recruit volunteers?

There are several methods of recruitment. Several questions need to be asked: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? Who do we have now? Who and what do we need? How will we find them? How will we ask them? How do we match the right person to the right job? What follow-through is needed?

An example of two different types of recruitment processes are:

a. “Warm Body Recruitment”

Warm body recruitment is effective when you are trying to recruit volunteers for positions that can be done by most people. Either no special skills are required or anyone can be taught the necessary skills in a limited amount of time. Examples of jobs for warm body recruitment include a “Hugger” at a youth camp event or a worker at an information booth. Warm body recruitment is particularly effective when seeking large numbers of volunteers for short-term simple jobs such as those who would help at a family day.

A method for warm body recruitment consists of spreading the message about potential volunteer positions to as broad an audience as possible. Examples of warm

body recruitment are: distribution of brochures, flyers, notices in the monthly newsletter, word of mouth, encouraging staff and volunteers to talk about volunteering.

b. “Targeted Recruitment”

Targeted recruitment should be used when the job that must be done is not general in nature, but requires a more specific skill or attitude. This could be an educational skill ability to do computer programming, setting up a monthly newsletter, a time availability chart (for volunteer scheduling), or a “selected blindness” (the ability to deal with civilians or military equally regardless of status or rank).

Remember, people volunteer for a variety of reasons. With most people, it is because a specific need is stated and they feel they can make the difference or fill the need. Stating the unit’s specific “needs” is the key to attracting most volunteers. A general message, such as “Volunteers are needed at the unit” doesn’t let anyone know what volunteers do there. The message doesn’t indicate to a potential volunteer that there is anything to do which they might find interesting.

The message must be clear and slightly different to each group you are trying to attract. For example, if you require a particular skill, such as someone with a financial background to help establish an accounting procedure for the funds raised by the unit, your targeted group could be retired persons or teachers who have the summer months off. Again, the list is endless.

The key to success is in matching the potential needs of the volunteer with the needs of the program. Focus on the features of the job, who would best be capable of performing the work, and who might benefit from participating in it. A plan of recruitment which focuses on the volunteer is always more likely to be successful.

3. How do we retain our volunteers?

The key to retaining volunteers is meeting the motivational needs of the volunteers. Motivation starts with the “right volunteer in the right position”.

a. **Orientation and training** plays a vital role in the success of the program. Orientation is the process of making volunteers understand and feel comfortable with the workings of the Family Readiness Group and the military. It should be designed to provide them with the background and practical information that they will use to relate what they are doing with the overall functions of the program and to better understand how they can contribute to the purpose of the program. If the volunteers better understand the systems, operations and procedures of the program, then the volunteers will be better able to contribute productively.

(1) **Orientation** content will vary from unit/battery/squadron but should cover the following:

- A description of the volunteer program
- A look at the organizational chart and introduction to key staff
- Time lines and descriptions of major organizational events and activities

- An orientation of the facilities and equipment.
- A description of volunteer procedures, recruiting requirements, benefits, training and supervision

(2) **Training** is the process of giving the volunteer the tools they need to prepare them for the job. Good training should include clear and significant purpose for the training, suitable facilities, realistic time frames, good materials for handouts, opportunity for discussion and interchange, opportunity for visual, auditory, and “hands-on” learning, and a few examples of successes and failures.

b. **Position Description.** Provide the volunteer with a position description that accurately describes their job. Discuss the position description with the volunteer and ensure the duties are clearly understood, who the volunteer will be working with, their role or task and who is responsible for supervising them.

c. **Recognize your volunteers.**

A volunteer's pay is recognition. Recognition is a year-round responsibility. Recognition should be a part of the management process so that people feel valued, good about themselves and the program.

One of the most important ways to recognize a volunteer is to place the volunteer in a suitable job. The job itself is the greatest motivator and it gives the volunteer the most satisfaction.

The most common mistake in recognition is that frequently we want to give volunteers the kind of recognition that we like. The cardinal rule of recognition is that it must be meaningful to the recipient.

The definition of the word recognition is the perception or acknowledgment of something as true and valuable. The most valuable resource in a Family Readiness program is the volunteer. Without the many volunteers who have organized, led and participated in Family Readiness programs, there would be no program.

(1) **Value of Recognition:**

Kenneth Kovach, a noted management consultant, asked managers to rank the following motivators:

- Appreciation
- Being an “insider”
- Money
- Interesting work
- Job security
- Loyalty from company
- Promotion
- Tactful disciplining
- Sympathy for problems
- Working conditions

According to how they thought the employees would rank them, he then asked the employees to rank them. Although this study was directed at paid employees, the same holds true for volunteers.

WHAT MANAGERS THOUGHT EMPLOYEES VALUED:

- Money
- Loyalty from company
- Job security
- Tactful disciplining
- Promotion
- Appreciation
- Working condition
- Sympathy for problems
- Interesting work
- Being an “insider”

WHAT EMPLOYEES REALLY VALUED:

- Appreciation
- Interesting work
- Being an “insider”
- Promotion
- Sympathy for problems
- Loyalty from company
- Job security
- Work conditions
- Money
- Tactful disciplining

Volunteers give of their time, talents, and ingenuity to make very positive contributions to the National Guard life style. Simply put, volunteers deserve recognition!

(2) Types of Recognition (See JFHQ Reg 608-2)

(a) Formal Recognition

Formal awards should be given as personally as possible, preferably by a person the volunteer knows. Formal recognition usually includes the awards (certificates, plaques, pins, etc...) and annual ceremonies held in honor of the volunteers.

(b) Informal Recognition

Informal recognition may be the most effective as it usually occurs in the day-to-day interchange between volunteer and staff through the sincere appreciation and thanks for the work being done by the volunteer. Some of the best and most creative recognition is simple and inexpensive.

The “different strokes for different folks” really holds true in volunteer recognition. For people motivated by social interaction, a social party and good food may be the best way to say “thank you”. For volunteers who are primarily motivated by being able to achieve, a new challenge or being sent to a seminar may be the best form of recognition. For people motivated by the opportunity to use their power and influence to help accomplish some agency objective, very visible public recognition, such as a picture and article about them in the local paper, may fit the bill.

Recognition should be given as soon after the activity as possible. Using humor and creativity in recognition demonstrates that you have put time and thought into personal recognition. Make sure that recognition is fair. If you reward volunteers who are not performing well, you will discourage the volunteers who are performing well.

(3) Levels of Recognition

Recognition takes place at many levels and in many forms. The first level of recognition is to simply acknowledge that someone has done something valuable for you by saying “thank you” at the time the service has been performed. A written acknowledgment in the monthly newsletter is another way to show appreciation and share it with others. A public thank is always appreciated but should never replace the personal thanks.

In addition to a personal thank you, there are numerous ways to express your appreciation that cost little or no money.

- Smile/be pleasant
- Put up a volunteer suggestion box
- Make them a part of the organization
- Recognize personal needs/problems
- Use in an emergency situation
- Accommodate personnel
- Post an “Honor Role” in reception needs and problems area
- Respect their wishes
- Keep challenging them
- Say “good morning”
- Greet them by name
- Help develop confidence
- Provide a clean work space
- Take time to explain
- Give additional responsibility
- Afford participation
- Take time to talk
- Respect sensitivities
- Defend against hostile or negative staff
- Say “good afternoon”
- Enable to grow on the job
- Honor their preferences out of the job
- Use as consultants
- Commend to supervisory staff
- Write thank you notes
- Recommend to prospective employers

- Openly celebrate
- Ask their opinion about projects
- Say “good night”
- Praise them to their friends/family
- Accept their individuality
- Ask how they’re doing
- Promote a “volunteer of the year” program
- Say “we missed you”
- Have a “recognition column” in the unit newsletter
- Say “thank you”

(a) Unit Level Family Readiness Recognition

A formal “in-house” recognition program should be established at a unit level. Recognition at this level can consist of the following items, a combination of items, and/or any appropriate form of recognition decided upon at the unit and uniformly applied.

- Letter of appreciation issued by the Commander or First Sergeant
- Certificate of appreciation signed by the Commander and/or the first Sergeant
- Certificate of participation issued by the project officer/volunteer project coordinator for a specific activity
- Certificate of participation issued annually to all participating volunteers and signed by the Unit Commander, First Sergeant, family assistance officer and/or unit Family Readiness coordinator.
- Presentation of unit coin, mug, caps T-shirt, etc.

(b) Battalion/Wing Level Family Readiness Recognition

Recognition at a Battalion/Wing level primarily takes the form of publicly presented certificates, plaques, etc. Recognition at this level can consist of the following items, a combination of items and/or any appropriate form of recognition decided upon by the battalion/wing and uniformly applied.

- Certificate of appreciation signed by the Commander, Command Sergeant Major, Family Readiness officer and/or volunteer Battalion/Wing coordinator
- Public statement of appreciation specifically naming volunteers at a battalion/wing wide function such as a picnic or all ranks ball
- Scroll and/or plaque at Battalion/Wing headquarters listing the names of volunteers who have given at least “X” number of hours of service to the Battalion/Wing.
- Battalion level Commander’s coin.

(c.) Major Command Level Recognition

Recognition at a major command level takes the form of publicly presented certificates, plaques, etc. A combination of items and/or any appropriate form of recognition decided upon by the command and uniformly applied. Recognition at this level can consist of the following:

- Certificate of appreciation signed by the Commander, Command Sergeant Major, Family Readiness officer and/or volunteer command coordinator
- Public statement of appreciation either acknowledging and/or naming volunteers at a command-wide function, such as a command sponsored ball.
- Presentation of an award or certificate at a special formation held at the headquarters.
- Scroll and/or plaque at command headquarters listing the names of volunteers who have given at least "X" number of hours of service to the command.
- Presentation of a volunteer of the year award (suggested awards are: mounted certificate, command plaque, collector plate, silver tray, etc)

(d) State Level Recognition

The State Family Program office administers certificates of excellence, appreciation and participation. These modes of recognition will be used for volunteers and Guard members who make a meaningful contribution to state-level Operation Ready Families activities and programs. Complete guidance on eligibility, criteria, etc for these awards, and others is contained in JFHQ Reg 608-2.

(i) State Certificates and Decorations

The State of Michigan has several decorations, which can also be awarded to civilians, including Family Readiness Volunteers, who similarly distinguish themselves. Procedures for applying for these awards can be obtained from the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel (DCSPER) Office.

(ii) Letters of Appreciation

A letter of appreciation may be presented to an individual or group of individuals who have performed service to the Michigan National Guard. These letters are typed on letterhead paper and do not contain formalized printing, seals or other distinguishing features.

(iii) Letters of Commendation

A letter of commendation may be presented to an individual for specific achievement or accomplishment. These letters are typed on letterhead paper and do not contain formalized printing, seals or other distinguishing features.

(iv) Family Readiness Meritorious Service Award

This award consists of a medallion attached to a purple ribbon along with a certificate for the recipient. Although we prefer to present this award at the annual State Family Conference, commanders may choose to recognize their volunteers with this award at their award events. If the latter form of recognition is made, the State will announce the names of these recipients at the annual conference.

(v) The Adjutant General's Volunteer of the Year Award

This award is presented to one Army and one Air Volunteer annually at the State Family Conference. The award consists of a plaque with the National Guard Family, along with a Certificate of Appreciation to each of the recipients. Recipient cannot be a Volunteer of the Year recipient from the previous year.

(vi) Family of the Year Award

This award recognizes an entire unit FRG as the Family of the Year. This award is presented annually at the State Family Conference to one Air Guard and one Army Guard unit FRG. The award consists of a marbled (blue for Air/green for Army) Plaque, as well as the unit's name on the Main Plaque on display at the State Headquarters.

Family Program Volunteer Guide

IV. What does the FRG do?

1. Now that we are an Enhanced Unit Family Readiness Group, what does this mean?

Congratulations, you've advanced to the next level of the family program. Even though you have progressed to the next step it is important that you build on the events you accomplished in the Basic Unit Family Readiness. Enhanced Unit Family Program moves towards community involvement, fund-raisers and advertising. It also focuses on the readiness group taking more of the responsibility of the unit and having less contact (direct contact) with the State Family Program Office, except for the quarterly reports.

The unit is responsible to publish a quarterly (if not monthly) newsletter, hold information sessions/meetings and other Family Readiness events. The readiness group should produce a continuity book to help the unit strive to gain charter recognition. During this phase, units build on the strengths within, as well as locating resources within the community that support guard activities.

a. Continuity Book

Units should develop a continuity/information book that would offer community support to families in the event that the unit deploys (training or combat). The continuity book offers a range of information from emergency contacts for plumbers, electricians and other maintenance contacts. This book should offer shelters, food kitchens and other emergency numbers in the event of a natural disaster or other unforeseen acts. It should be available to all families to offer different services that support families during time of need.

The Red Cross is a valuable resource for the continuity book because in a time of need the Red Cross is always available for assistance. To ensure the Red Cross is able to help it is imperative that minimum information is furnished prior to the unit's departure. The information should include the deploying service members and social security number, a forwarding address, the guard member's emergency contact at home station (in the event the Red Cross has to contact the family) and start and return dates for the deployment. This information is strictly confidential and the Red Cross will not give the information out without the consent of the guard member.

FRG should have a family assistance form (including a privacy policy) on each soldier in the unit as the MOB file on each soldier goes with them. This process has been very successful with our units.

b. Community Involvement

At this point there should be a plethora of community involvement but more can be solicited to ensure a solid unit and community relationship. Key community leaders should be identified; leaders like the mayor, the community Red Cross agent, as well as, the regional representative along with prominent business leaders who support guard activities. Involvement should also include speaking with the Chamber of Commerce,

School Boards and Counselors and employers of each area. This enhanced community activity also includes veterans and retired military families, these are valuable resources and in many cases have experienced many deployments and can offer valuable information and service.

2. Now that we have a group what type of Activities/Events do we conduct or participate in?

a. Annual Holiday Meal/Briefings

The holiday meal is served during December drill because of the proximity to Christmas and other holidays. The holiday meal should be announced at least three months in advance to ensure all service members' families are invited. Formal and informal invitations should be sent with RSVP requirement, individuals who do not respond should be contacted to insure they received the invitation and to make sure they understand the importance of their participation.

This meal serves many purposes and is built up to portray the special nature of the event. Service members and families are encouraged to participate in the planning and function of the meal. Unit commanders are encouraged to leave the training schedule open in the event that issues/questions arise. The open training time also allows the Family Readiness Group the opportunity to give the annual Family Readiness briefing.

The military briefings should include the activity of the Family Readiness Group throughout the year. The briefing should include upcoming events, goals, and accomplishments and should impress upon the soldiers the need to make sure their families are well prepared for the separation. Welcoming new service members and their families should also be included to help them feel more comfortable in their new undertakings. The briefing is an opportunity to request new support and solicit participation from family members.

As the Family Readiness Group develops the group can host picnics, golf outings and other Family Readiness functions to spur family participation. These additional functions will help the unit grow and progress towards the Progressive Unit Family Program. The additional functions depend on the responsiveness of the unit.

b. Family Readiness Message in the Unit Newsletter

Most units send out a monthly training bulletin to inform service members of upcoming critical events. The monthly newsletter is a prime opportunity for the Family Readiness Group to announce future activities, to welcome new service members/families and ask for additional volunteers. It is not intended to take away from the previously mentioned annual briefing. The intention is to enhance the message being delivered. Often the newsletter is addressed to the service member and family members do not have a chance to read it. A helpful hint is to have the unit address it to the service member/family of _____. Addressing the newsletter with family included will enhance the opportunity to read the letter and learn of upcoming news events.

c. Telephone Tree (Chain of Concern)

The telephone tree is the primary means of communication for the Family Readiness Group. Establishing the tree is as easy as obtaining names and telephone numbers of unit members who participate in the family program. The tree identifies individuals who offer different services (plumbers, electricians and mechanics etc.) within the unit. This is especially helpful to service members/families that are new to the area. In the event of a deployment, the telephone tree is a useful way of disseminating unit/service member information and to check on families. The tree must not be abused and cannot be used as the only source of communication. The most critical aspect of this tree is whenever a service member is deployed, whether it is to a school, annual training, or a full-year deployment, the family members of that service member need to be kept in contact with and this is the means by which that is conducted. Ensuring the FRG volunteer committees know who needs to be contacted and why is critical.

d. New Family Sponsorship Program

Most units have a sponsorship program for new service members assigned to them, but few units have any type of program setup to assist new families to the unit/community. The sponsorship program should orient the new family to the critical facilities and contacts within the community. It should also identify contacts within the unit FRG who can assist in the event of an actual deployment. The incoming family may have new ideas that could assist the Family Readiness Group (from previous Family Readiness experiences).

e. Family Readiness Group Events

The Family Readiness Group should think about other events other than the holiday meal to show support of the guard members. Picnics, parades (coincide with community celebrations) and other gatherings should be scheduled and all families should be encouraged to attend. By encouraging attendance it sends the message that all families are important to Family Readiness, just as each guard member is to the mission of the unit.

The unit family readiness coordinator should delegate tasks to other family members who express interest in the Family Readiness program. The more family participation the stronger the Family Readiness Group will become. This means more planning and participation for all events. The Family Readiness coordinator can not handle all aspects of the event and expect it to run smoothly. USE YOUR RESOURCES.

f. Guard Family Team Building

The family readiness team is one of the most important pieces of guard strength. Without Family Readiness, recruiting and retention would be more challenging than it already is. Like the guard, it is challenging to bring such a wide array of experience together (Family Readiness Group) without introducing team building to its members. Team building is the most import aspect when you bring so many people together in an attempt to work together. When Guard units are formed there is a common theme because most of the individuals are working toward a common goal/mission (Military Police, Communications or Intelligence etc.). Family Readiness is different because family members do not always know or understand the unit's mission, so there is a need

for team building exercises. Formal team building classes can be scheduled or the Family Readiness Group can get together and plan informal ways to build their team.

g. Family Readiness Group Newsletter

Now that the Family Readiness Group has established itself as a group, it is a great idea to develop a unit family readiness newsletter to inform families of upcoming events and possible deployments. The newsletter is a fantastic way to share ideas without calling each family within a unit and it should be shared with all units in the battalion so everyone can give support to each other. The newsletter should be addressed to the family rather than the service member to ensure valuable information is passed on.

Newsletters can be used to share concerns, ideas and thoughts within the group. Newsletters are used to assist with common military acronyms, upcoming drill dates and annual training periods. Newsletters recognize family members that received honors, new additions to the family and to report family members that passed away. The newsletter is a way to say hello when there are no “important” activities taking place. The Family Readiness Group shouldn’t depend on the few lines in the unit’s monthly newsletter to get the important information out.

The Family Readiness Group should nominate a newsletter committee to handle the monthly or quarterly (eventually you’ll want a monthly letter) correspondence. The committee can be just one individual or can be a group of individuals. It is recommended that several family members handle this responsibility because of the amount of work necessary to complete the letter. For ideas on the newsletter contact the State Family Program Office.

h. Informational/Training Sessions

Every month the guard unit holds monthly training meetings to ensure goals and expectations are met or trained on. Family Readiness Groups should also meet to ensure all family members are aware of upcoming events and functions. Information sessions should be scheduled prior to a support function or to pass on important information that might be too complicated to print in the newsletter. Information sessions are a great way to get the “pulse” of the Family Readiness Group, as well as passing on critical information. Additionally, family members should be trained on various skills they may need to fall back on during times when their service member is away, as well as general training on various military topics, i.e. retirement pay, benefits and just simple day to day routine.

i.) Fund-raisers

The Family Readiness Group is authorized, by regulation, to keep one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) in the Family Readiness Group fund. The fund should be maintained by the unit commander (or representative) and strict accounting should be practiced. Donations or fund-raisers can generate the fund. Common fund-raisers include bake sales, 50-50 raffles (or other raffles), golf outings, ornament sales, shirt sales, craft sales

or any other creative ideas that the support group comes up with. There are other ways that the Family Readiness Group can raise funds. During the fund raising process the Family Readiness Group should consult the Judge Advocate General (JAG) office if the donations/prizes are over five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

The Family Readiness fund also pays for holiday meals, gifts for children at Christmas, donations or other activities that create monetary lost to the group. If the Family Readiness Group raises FRG more than one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) the unit must have that amount exceeding the \$1,000 threshold earmarked for specific events/activities. Although not it's main purpose, the FRG fund can be used to help families in need when a hardship arises that is extremely grave,

j. Retention Involvement

By having a strong Family Readiness Group and having active participation service members will be more likely to maintain years of service within the guard. Often service members resign or fail to reenlist because of family concerns/constraints. By involving all families in the Family Readiness Group one of the goals is to decrease the number of service members who exit the military because of family challenges. Examples have been given of spouse's who force service members out because they do not understand why the member is gone so much, or they have no idea what the service member does when he or she is gone. The Family Readiness Group is one more information source to help keep these members in the service. To maintain the strong military we need to maintain the knowledge and experience of all service members. One thing to keep in mind, we have the strongest military in the world and the National Guard and Reserves are a major key to that power.

3. How do we know when we've become a "Progressive Unit Family Readiness Group"?

The progressive unit family program is what each unit should strive for. In this phase the unit Family Readiness Group acts as a unit and has little interaction or guidance from the state office. During this phase the Family Readiness Group is actively involved in everything the unit does. The Family Readiness Group develops a readiness checklist, participates in youth programs, identifies and recognizes superior volunteer performance, as well as being involved in all phases of training. There are other areas of involvement, which force the Family Readiness Group to be proactive; these areas will be covered in the upcoming paragraphs.

a. Readiness Checklist

The readiness checklist is a tool used to identify functions of the Family Readiness Group during pre-deployment, deployment and re-deployment. The checklist identifies specific individuals who will offer key support during these critical times. It is a planning function that will actively assist the deploying unit and make the transition easier. The checklist is very specific and identifies individuals or organizations to be contacted in the event of an emergency. When necessary it identifies the official phone tree and identifies how often family members will be contacted during a service member's absence.

b. Youth Mentorship Program

The Family Readiness Group encourages active participation in the state Youth Mentorship Program by soliciting youth participants and volunteers to support the youth activities. The state youth program is a key program within the state and each unit should develop programs so the program continues to be successful. Programs include identifying potential youth participants, creating classes/activities that help our youth relate to the military and to understand what sacrifices their family members are giving. Adult volunteers are needed to run various state programs and each unit should do its part to stay involved. More information on this is in Chapter 7 of the JFHQ Reg 608-2.

c. Active Employer Support Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

Family Readiness Groups should recognize employers who actively support service members. When service members train to defend our country many employers are forced to continue operating with a weakened workforce (due to service member absence). The Family Readiness Group should recognize these employers especially the employers who actively participate in guard events such as picnics and fund-raisers. Many employers recognize the value of the military and they should be identified to ensure future readiness.

d. Volunteer Recognition Program

At this point it is obvious to see that many volunteers sacrifice many hours of time to ensure the Family Readiness program success, it is important to recognize this hard work and dedication. Unit awards and state awards should be given. Volunteers who go “above and beyond” the call of duty can be recognized for the “State Volunteer of the Year” award and can be submitted to receive national awards. Recognizing volunteers is essential in order to maintain a healthy support program.

e. Resource Library

Just as each unit has a training library, each Family Readiness Group should have a resource library. The resource library can be made of past activities and deployments and can be used for future events. The library should be maintained in the Family Readiness Office and used so past successful activities can be referenced and mistakes can be built upon. The reference library can be an effective place to store historical unit information, as well as, an area where future volunteers can reference the success of the program and of the unit. The old saying, “don’t reinvent the wheel” principle comes into play for the library. Identify unit strengths and weaknesses; build on the strengths and work/train on the weaknesses. The resource library should also include pamphlets, materials and websites for use in conferences and seminars.

f. Involvement in all Periods of Training

The Family Readiness Group is not only interested in deployments rather it is interested in all aspects of unit training. The group is interested when the unit sends a service member to basic training or to any type of training. It is interested when the unit does mobilization exercises and is present during the exercises. The group is present during IDT and ADT training and of course the support group is present during pre-deployment, deployment and re-deployment from training or wartime missions.

g. Involvement with Mobilization Exercises

Units are often scheduled to participate in mobilization exercises to test the unit's strengths and weaknesses in the event of an actual mobilization. The Family Readiness Group should maintain an active involvement during the mobilization exercises. During the exercise the Family Readiness Group has an opportunity to be evaluated by the state Family Readiness Group office. The evaluation should identify strengths and weaknesses that must be addressed to ensure success during an actual deployment. During the basic and enhanced unit family programs the state will run the Family Readiness station but as unit's progress into the progressive program it will be the unit's responsibility to run the Family Readiness station. **UNIT FRGs WILL NOT BE INVOLVED IN STATE SOLDIER READINESS PROCESSING (SRPs).**

h. Training Programs for Volunteers

As the Family Readiness Group becomes more active the group should identify training requirements to teach new family members what the support group does. New family members might be overwhelmed by the amount of participation and may feel like they don't belong or can't offer any new ideas. Training should be conducted by support group personnel, state Family Readiness personnel or through other training medians such as the Red Cross. Maintaining a trained group will ensure success during times of hardship and deployments.

i. Corporate Sponsorship

Corporate sponsors are a great way to show support for the family program. Many corporations have guard members employed and are more than willing to sponsor the Family Readiness program to ensure their service members families are taken care of if the service member is deployed for any extended period. Corporate sponsorship is a great way to build the Family Readiness fund and to support family picnics and events that involve the community. Remember if these corporations are willing to donate time and money, it is important to recognize them at all levels possible to ensure future contributions.

4. How do we ensure our Families and Soldiers are Ready?

a. Personal and Family Affairs

Recent events demonstrate that members may be unexpectedly summoned to active duty. You may have months, days or only hours to arrange your personal affairs before you are sent far away. The disruption and strain on the family that mobilization causes cannot be prevented, but you can take steps to reduce the stress and prevent economic hardship that mobilization could cause.

This guide is not intended to replace individual advice from your attorney, banker, or financial planner. The guide is no substitute for a tax counselor or an estate plan. Each Guard member is encouraged to consult an attorney, tax advisor or financial planner about your individual needs. Even if you are not mobilized, this planning will be of great assistance to you, your spouse, and your family. Obviously, the needs of a single person will differ from the member with a large family. You should assess their soldier's individual needs using this guide to help. You owe it to yourself and those dependents, to take the time to make this assessment and to follow through.

(1) ID Cards

Service members are responsible for ensuring all dependents have ID cards. Spouses and children 10 years of age and older living with the soldier need to have an ID card. Children will continue to be eligible for ID cards until they are 21 years of age. After 21, if they are enrolled in college full-time (at least 12 credit hours) they are eligible for ID cards until their 23rd birthday or the date of their graduation, whichever occurs first. Single-parent soldiers or soldiers with children who reside with someone else, are required to provide their children ID cards regardless of how young they are. Guard/Reserve dependent ID cards are red in color where active duty (active for 180 days or longer) dependents require the tan colored ID cards.

(2) DEERS

All service members are responsible for ensuring their family members are in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Units do not have DEERS update capability; therefore service members must take necessary source documentation (birth certificates, social security cards, divorce decrees, marriage licenses, adoption papers, court appointment ward documentation, affidavits of parentage, etc.) to the nearest DEERS facility to ensure the family members are in the system. To find out where the nearest location to you is, go to www.dmdc.osd.mil. Most facilities require appointments and only operate on certain schedules. Calling ahead will eliminate the possibility of being turned away from being serviced at these locations.

(3) Family Care Plans

All service members who have dependents incapable of self-care who do not have another family member in the household, i.e. a spouse, who can assume those responsible dependents during times of deployment are required to have a Family Care Plan (Army personnel AR 600-20 and Air Force personnel AFI 36-2908). Failure to provide a proper and workable family care plan can result in the service member being discharged from continued military service. Testing the care plans should be an annual or on-going requirement. Any time the service member goes away for any type of training, school, etc., the test of the care plan should be made to ensure it indeed meets the need of the service member and his/her dependents. Soldiers who have their children for 30 or more consecutive days even though not the custodial parent, will also be required to have a Family Care Plan as stipulated in the governing directive. Extreme care must be made in determining who the service member elects to care for their dependents during their absence. Furthermore, the service member is required to

provide support to their named Family Care Plan designee for the express purpose of providing for the financial needs of the dependents during those periods of absence.

b. Making a Personal and Financial File

Most people are not tightly organized. They need a systematic way to keep track of important papers. Good organization can't prevent the unexpected, but it can avoid or minimize the consequences. Planning and training are the keys to meeting the mission requirements. These are also the keys to this mission, i.e., surviving mobilization.

c. Identify and Inventory Your Assets

You can't develop a plan to protect your assets unless you have a comprehensive list of what it is you are going to protect. The guard member and his/her family should have a personal assets inventory that lists such things as real property (deeds to real estate, leases, rental agreements), personal property (cars, jewelry, boats, stocks or bonds, etc.), business ownership, life insurance policies, banking records and the like. Almost every insurance company will give you a checklist for these types of things if you ask, or ask your local Judge Advocates Office for an Annual Legal Check-up. Get an inventory of these assets and organize it, get all the documents of title (deeds, car registration, options to buy, life insurance policies, etc.) together. When you have your inventory complete and have your important papers together, you will have completed the first step toward organizing your personal affairs.

The following is a list of documents and supporting materials that you should gather together and place in a safe deposit box, personal safe or any other secure locations. Remember, your family must have easy access so make arrangements with that in mind. You should gather your:

- Birth certificates
- Adoption papers
- Marriage licenses and certificates
- Wills/Powers of Attorney
- Divorce papers
- Life insurance and medical policies
- Social Security cards and records
- Other personal records and/or documents
- Your personal inventory of DD Form 1543 (Annual Legal Checkup)
- Photographs of your real and personal property
- Automobile/truck titles and/or registration form(s) (List the location of payments books and any other repayment information or instructions)
- Automobile insurance policies (List payment information or instructions).
- Mortgages, deeds, titles, leases, or tax receipts for real property (list payment instructions).
- Information about stocks, bonds or mutual funds.
- Financial information such as name, address, account number of bank(s), or credit union(s), and type of account whether joint or single.

- List the location of payment book(s) and other repayment information or instruction(s). List location to report lost, stolen, or incorrect billing statements, and credit card numbers.

Soldiers should be encouraged to provide various types of information to their family members during periods of separation. This may include such things as the location, serial numbers, policy numbers, and other valuable information that would be useful to their spouse or appointed person in their absence.

If soldiers were to be mobilized now, would their spouse have all the necessary information to seek assistance should the need arise? Planning and education ensures families readiness during these times, so the FRG should do their part to aid in the readiness of the families by educating them on issues such as this.

d. ESTATE PLANNING

Death is a subject about which most people are reluctant to talk. However, proper estate planning and the execution of necessary legal documents in advance can make such an event an easier burden on the family.

Estate planning is simply devising a plan to pass assets to survivors without difficulty or exposure to unnecessary taxes. If you plan, it will be you, not the state, who will select what your heir(s) will receive from your estate. Your estate plan will depend on your desires and on the nature and extent of your assets.

Your military Judge Advocate's office can offer advice on this subject and provide you with a simple will. If you have significant assets or special concerns, you should consult private attorneys to meet your needs. You cannot afford to put off this task.

Once you have completed your inventory, you then will be ready to take the next step – preparing an estate plan that permits you to manage your resources to protect your spouse, your children and your parents in the best possible way in the light of your circumstances. The tools of estate planning include:

- Outright gifts during life
- Life insurance
- Passing property by will
- Trusts
- Social Security/pensions
- Special devices and arrangements
- Ownership planning

e. Wills

Every adult should have a will to ensure that his/her wishes are carried out in the future.

Every state and territory has a Law of Wills. These laws are the scheme devised by that state to govern the distribution of your assets upon death. These laws provide for the formalities required of a will and restrict the methods, amount or manner by which property is transferred.

A will is a legal document that must be executed (signed before the required number of witnesses) according to the laws of the state in which the person has established residence. A will designates persons who shall inherit property and the specific property each person shall receive. The nomination of a guardian for minor children can only be done through a will. In selecting a guardian, you are asking a competent adult to stand in as the parent of your child/children. You must first ask the guardian if they are willing to serve before you nominate them in your will. A guardian cannot be compelled to serve, and the time to find this out is not when your will takes effect.

Whenever a person dies without a will (intestate), the state in which he/she lives follows established laws to decide what happens with that person's property. The laws which govern the distribution of estates vary throughout the various states and territories. Intestate laws will provide and specify the persons who are entitled to receive your property, the order in which they will receive it, and the share of your property, which each person will receive.

(1) Preparing a Will

Once you have decided to prepare a will, make an appointment with a lawyer. Before going to that appointment, you and your spouse need to decide:

- Who will carry out the wishes expressed in the will – act as the **PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE** (also known as the executor or administrator).
- Who will act as guardian of the children if both you and your spouse were to die.
- What special instructions you want included (trust funds, disposition of family heirlooms, living wills, specific gifts of property, etc.).

The personal representative whom you choose to carry out your wishes expressed in your will have the authority to administer and settle your estate. This person should be someone both you and your spouse have confidence in and who is willing to serve in that position. You should also choose an alternate person who could be named in the will as personal representative in the event your first choice is unable to serve for any reason.

(2) Expression of Guardianship

If you have minor children, you will need to designate a guardian, someone to care for them in the event that both you and your spouse should die. It is extremely important to check with that person to make sure that he/she is willing to act as guardian and to accept the responsibilities which go along with it. A probate court reviews your choice, and almost always will follow your wishes.

A guardian has two major functions. The first is to provide for the proper care of the children until they reach the age of majority – become adults. The second function entails the managing and distribution of the property and money that you leave to them.

f. Trusts

Another way in which a person can transfer property in the event of death is the use of a testamentary trust. This is a trust that is created in your will and is silent until your death. A trust is an agreement whereby a person who establishes the trust – the settler or grantor- gives property to a trustee for the benefit of a beneficiary of the trust. Today many people are interested in a “Living “Trust”. A “Living Trust” is a trust made during your life. It is a present give of the property and not a gift that is effective after you die.

g. Power of Attorney

The final step in premobilization planning is to consider whether you will need to have someone manage your affairs in your absence, and if so, then to execute (prepare and sign) the proper legal documents to authorize them to do so.

Upon mobilization, you may be unable to handle your affairs and may need to appoint someone else to act for you. A power of attorney is a written legal document by which you, the grantor or donor, give someone else, call the “attorney-in-fact” or the “donee”, the authority to act as your agent or attorney, either generally or for some more specific limited purpose.

(1) General and Special Powers of Attorney

A “**general**” power of attorney gives your agent the right to conduct any business transaction you could do personally, including the right to sell your property and use your credit. This type of power of attorney authorizes another person to do any final act, which you might do yourself and which will bind you personally just as though you did it yourself. It should be used with extreme caution.

A “**special**” power of attorney gives your agent the right to act on your behalf for some particular transaction. With planning, your “attorney-in-fact” can be provided with specific instructions and a special power of attorney can be created to protect your interest while minimizing the delegation of authority.

(2) Precautions in Authorizing Your Power of Attorney

Never give your power of attorney to anyone who is not absolutely trustworthy, reliable, capable, efficient, and competent.

A general power of attorney is seldom necessary. A special power of attorney for a specific purpose(s) is more likely to be accepted.

Once a power of attorney is granted, it can be revoked at any time. The instrument should contain a self-executing revocation date (expiration date). If one gives a power of attorney, it should be effective for no more than the period necessary to accomplish the purpose. We recommend that it be generally for no more than one year.

There is no military requirement for you to give someone your power of attorney before you mobilize. The need for one is entirely personal and should be tailored to meet your individual needs and desires.

(3) Preparation of a Power of Attorney

State laws differ regarding the form and content of a power of attorney. For this reason, a power of attorney should be prepared with the advice of an attorney familiar with applicable state laws. The power of attorney must be written and be notarized by a notary public.

(4) Termination of the Power of Attorney

If a power of attorney is not limited by time or transaction, it stays in effect until revoked or terminated by the death of either the maker or the agent. A power of attorney is automatically revoked when you destroy the original and all copies.

You can revoke a power of attorney at any time by sending a notice of revocation to the agent concerned. You should execute copies of the notice of revocation with all the formalities taken in executing the power. You should have the notice of revocation recorded where the power of attorney was recorded. In general, you should have a power of attorney revoked after it has served its purpose.

h. Service Members and Sailors Civil Relief Act

The Service members and Sailors Civil Relief Act (SSCRA) was enacted by Congress at the beginning of World War II to provide service members with temporary relief from civil proceedings so they could “devote their entire energy to the defense needs of the Nation.”

This law was intended to make the transition from civilian to military life less of a hardship. The SSCRA has been amended and may be amended in the future. This guide is not a legal treatise. Remember, these benefits apply not only to the service member, but also to his/her dependents and to those persons who are primarily or secondarily liable for obligations of the service member.

(1) Effective Date of Coverage by the SSCRA

The protection and relief of the SSCRA begin when the individual receives orders to report for extended active duty (at least 31 days) and ends within a short period of time after separation from military service.

Subsection 101 (2) of the Act [50 U.S.C App. Section 511] states that the protection of the Act is afforded from the moment one enters on “active duty”. The protection continues until you are released from active service. The terms “active service” and “active duty” are both used in the Act and are synonymous. These terms mean full-time duty in the active military service of the United States. This would include not only full-time duty or an active duty list but also full-time training in the active military

service and training at a school designated as a service school by law or by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned. These terms also include periods during which a person in military service is absent from duty on account of sickness, wounds, leave or other lawful cause. **The Act does not cover periods of State active duty and inactive duty for training.**

A fundamental requirement of the SSCRA is that your military service must materially affect your ability to meet your obligations. If your military pay exceeds your civilian pay, then arguably, your military duty does not materially affect your ability to meet your debts. Ordinarily, the service member or their “attorney-in-fact” must trigger the provisions of the Act, that is, the person must direct the creditor’s attention to the fact that he/she is now in the active military service and that the provisions of the SSCRA apply.

(2) Statute of Limitations

Each state and the federal government establish certain time limits within which a lawsuit must be brought or it will be barred. These are commonly referred to as statutes of limitations. Generally, if the lawsuit is not filed within the time period allowed, you may not thereafter bring suit on that claim. Under the SSCRA the applicable statute of limitations for claims for or against you may be accumulated during the period of military service. This is a very technical and critical area. If you believe that you have a legal claim or that someone may have a claim against you, or you are activated, you should immediately contact your legal office.

(3) Financial Relief

The SSCRA provides certain procedures you can follow to obtain relief in the event that you are not able to meet those financial obligations.

The SSCRA applies only to those obligations incurred prior to entry onto military service. If you are activated and then buy a car, the SSCRA will not apply to that debt. If you expect to be mobilized, you should govern yourself accordingly. Remember, the SSCRA is not intended to be used as a means of avoiding your just obligations.

The SSCRA provides that your creditors cannot foreclose on or repossess your property unless the creditor brings a lawsuit and unless the court determines that your military service materially affected your ability to pay your obligations. **(Appendix F)**

(4) Housing

One of the most significant problems for the mobilized person concerns housing for his/her dependents while he/she is gone. If you are renting or leasing your home or an apartment, you or your dependents can lawfully terminate the lease or rental agreement even though you may have a long term lease or rental agreement. This can be done only by written notice to quit the premises effective thirty (30) days after the next rental payment is due or effective on the last day of the month after the month when you or your dependents deliver the written notice to the landlord. **(Appendix G)**

If you have rented an apartment or house at not more than \$1,200 per month, and after entry on active duty you default in making rental payments, the landlord cannot evict you or your dependents unless the landlord brings a lawsuit and unless the court finds that failure to pay rent was not materially affected by your entry on active duty.

(5) Interest Rates

The SSCRA provides that if you owe money to anyone and the interest rate is more than 6% per annum, this interest rate will automatically be reduced to 6% while you are on active duty. However, a written request must be submitted to each creditor.

The SSCRA prevents denial of credit; a change in existing credit terms (unless you agree to them); and/or refusal to grant credit on the terms normally set out by the creditor (i.e., waiver of your rights under the SSCRA). No adverse credit report can be issued due to requesting protection under the SSCRA.

(6) Insurance Premiums

Another provision in the SSCRA allows you to obtain a government guarantee of premium payments on up to \$10,000 of life insurance owned by you prior to entry on active duty. In effect, you can obtain a deferment on payment of premiums during the period of your active duty, however, to do so you must file an application with the Veteran's Administration.

(7) Legal Defense

In any circumstance when you are sued and are on active duty far from the court where the lawsuit is pending, you should contact your military legal assistance officer. Those appointed lawyers cannot waive or compromise any of your rights, but he/she can represent your interests and insure that the court fully considers the material affect your military service has on your ability to pay your debts.

(8) Judgements

If a judgment has been taken against you either before or during active duty, and your failure to comply with that judgment is materially affected by your being on active duty, then the court has the power to prevent the judgment from being enforced by the judgment creditor. Any judgment obtained by default (you failed to appear and defend) can be set aside under the SSCRA.

(9) Income Tax

When the military details you to various duty stations around the country, you do not become subject to the state income taxes of those states. You continue to be subject only to the state income tax, if any, of your home state where your domicile continued.

(10) Conclusion

Some of you will need to do more than others to put your personal affairs in order. However, at the very least you should consider doing the following:

Consider making a will especially if you have minor children and own real estate. If you already have a will, make sure it is up to date. A new one should be executed if significant events have occurred, such as the birth of a new child, divorce, etc. Have you designated a personal representative and guardian who have agreed to serve.

Be sure your Record of Emergency Data and Annual Legal checkup forms are accurate and to date. Check your personnel file.

Maintain your own personal file of military records. Keep a copy of your list of assets in this file.

Keep your important papers in a safe place and tell your next of kin where they are located.

Tell your family about government benefits and their entitlement in the event of your death. Be sure to advise your spouse or family that they can receive legal assistance from the nearest JAG officer while you are on active duty.

The Service members and Sailors Civil Relief Act is a statute designed to avoid military service being a burden on the military member's dependents and civilian relationships simply because he/she must leave the civilian environment and respond to his/her country's call for military service. The individual, his/her dependents, and persons who are co-obligated with him/her are entitled to the SSCRA's protection and are entitled to assistance by the military legal assistance officer.

Family Program Volunteer Guide

Conclusion

The Family Readiness program is essential to the success or failure of guard units and guard members. Every unit in the state should have a Family Readiness system to help provide for its families during times of need. During our current pace at which the National Guard is being tasked to serve world missions, Family Readiness Groups are meeting the challenge and working together to ensure family safety and well being, however in some units, the Family Readiness mission has taken a “back seat”. The challenge for every unit Family Readiness Program is to progress through the levels (basic, enhanced and progressive) and operate as if the unit is deploying tomorrow.

This guide is an example of what units should strive to accomplish, it is a guideline and units should attempt to go beyond the examples listed within. Family Readiness Groups need to have ownership in their unit to invoke a successful program. When Family Readiness Groups take ownership of their unit and program, with the proper guidance and support from the military commander, First Sergeant and other key leaders, then the unit will prosper and maintain the effective unit strength. **For additional guidance contact the State Family Program Office located in Lansing, Michigan at one of the following numbers: 517-702-5116, Pager 1-877-616-0128 or cell phone 517-290-8052.**

APPENDIX A

Sample Duty Appointment for Unit Volunteer

(Unit Heading)

(600-19a)

(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Designation of Unit Family Volunteer

1. Effective 1 February 1999, Mrs. Mary Doe is designated as the Unit Family Volunteer for Btry B 1st Bn 182nd FA.
2. Authority: Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) Reg 608-2
3. Purpose: Mrs. Mary S. Doe, 5428 Buena Park Rd., Motor City, MI 48888 (H) number, (W) number, will serve as the key volunteer staff member of this unit in carrying out and conducting MIARNG Family Program.
4. Period: *(Volunteer commitment should normally be for on year. However, commitment may be less than a year. Yearly or other period of commitment may be renewed up to a recommended maximum period of 3 years.)*
5. Special Instructions: *Commander may designate authorized use of government resources here, or outline approval procedures for activities. **Example:** Mrs. Mary Doe is authorized to publish a quarterly command letter for families and use government postage. She is authorized to use the unit phone for official family program activities. She is authorized to use available space in the armory for official family program activities by making arrangements through the facilities manager. She is authorized to use government office equipment and supplies as required to perform her duties as the Family Volunteer for this command. Any special requests for government resources should be directed to the Unit Family Assistance Officer.*

John J. Smith
Capt., MIARNG
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:
Mrs. Mary S. Doe
MIAR-PA-FAM
Cdr, 57th FA Bde
Cdr, 182nd FA Bde
Unit Family Assistance Officer
Unit File

APPENDIX B

Sample Volunteer Job Descriptions

VOLUNTEER POSITION: Editor of Unit Family Program Newsletter

Description: Publish a FP Newsletter each quarter. Provide family members in the unit with pertinent information about the unit, family benefits and activities, and information about the FP and the National Guard. Keep family members informed and educated.

Functions: Establish a Newsletter Committee to assist the editor in publishing the newsletter. Follow all regulations and directives regarding use of government postage and mailing. Unit Commander must approve content of newsletter.

Qualifications: Good communication skills, organizational skills, writing skills. Ability to prepare material for publication and meet deadlines. Ability to work with and supervise others.

VOLUNTEER POSITION: Telephone Tree Coordinator

Description: Establish and maintain a FP Telephone Tree.

Functions: Establish a Telephone Tree Committee responsible for gathering and updating telephone tree information. Appointing and training section heads in their responsibilities. Establishing guidelines for the use of the Telephone Tree and safeguarding telephone numbers for Official Use Only.

Qualifications: Good communication and organizational skills. Ability to work with and supervise others.

Volunteer Commitment: 1 year, renewable up to a suggested maximum of 3 years.

VOLUNTEER POSITION: Sponsorship Committee Coordinator

Description: Responsible for establishment and functions of welcoming new families in the unit.

Functions: Work with Unit Family Assistance Officer/NCO in development of a Unit Family Sponsorship Program. Establish a committee of family members who will act as sponsors for new family members and will assist with the development of the program. Establish committee materials and procedures that will be used for sponsorship.

Qualifications: Ability to communicate with and supervise others. A willingness to meet new people

VOLUNTEER POSITION: Youth Mentorship Program Coordinator

Description: Develop safe, educational and fun activities for children during the FP meetings or other unit family activities.

Functions: Establish a Children's Activities Committee to develop activities and equipment required.

Qualifications: Experience or desire to work with children. Supervisory and communication skills Creativity and knowledge of age appropriate activities for children.

Volunteer commitment: 1 year, renewable up to a suggested maximum of 3 years.

POSITION TITLE: Battalion FRG Advisor/Coordinator/Lead Volunteer

RESPONSIBLE TO: Battalion Commander and Brigade FRG Advisor

PURPOSE: Organize battalion-level FRG structure

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- Supports the commander's family readiness goals
- Serves on battalion FRG steering committee: may chair the committee, as well
- Provides guidance and support to all unit FRG leaders
- Fields specific family readiness problems and discusses them with steering committee
- Gathers and disseminates information on activities at the battalion level and above
- Delegates FRG projects to senior spouses for resolution
- Acts as liaison between battalion and unit-level FRGs
- Acts as battalion FRG spokesperson for communicating family members' concerns and ideas to the battalion commander

TIME REQUIRED: Ten to 20 hour a week, depending on unit deployment Status and other scheduled activities; commitment Usually for duration of the battalion commander's tour of duty

QUALIFICATONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Knowledge of family readiness programs, unit structure and procedures, and post agencies and services
- Ability to work well with steering committee and unit FRG leaders
- Ability to persuade people to get things done

RECOMMENDED TRAINING:

- Operation READY classes
- AFTB Levels I-III
- Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve)
- Volunteer training and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE: **Company FRG Leader/ Coordinator/President**

RESPONSIBLE TO: Company Commander

PURPOSE: Organize and lead unit-level FRG

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- Supports the commander's family readiness goals
- Provides overall leadership of the FRG committees
- Delegates FRG responsibilities to selected volunteers as committee chairpersons, or presides over their elections
- Serves as a member of the battalion-level steering committee
- Identifies needs or unique problems of unit families
- Acts as unit FRG spokesperson for communicating family members' concerns and ideas to the unit commander and, if needed, the battalion-level FRG leader.

TIME REQUIRED: 8-10 hours a week, depending on deployment status and
And other scheduled activities; commitment usually
duration of command

QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Knowledge of family readiness programs, unit structure and procedures, and post agencies and services
- Ability to work well with soldiers and families and persuade people to get things done

RECOMMENDED TRAINING:

- Operation READY classes
- AFTB Levels I-III

- Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve)
- Volunteer training and/ or past experience

POSITION TITLE: **FRG Secretary**

RESPONSIBLE TO: FRG Leader/Coordinator/President

PURPOSE: Maintain accurate minutes of meetings and distribute Information and correspondence to FRG leader and newsletter editor

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- Maintains a FRG binder with a calendar, to do list, current Chain O Concern roster, sign-in sheets, agendas and minutes, and after-action reports
- Ensures confidentiality and acts in a sensitive manner
- Updates the contact roster with telephone numbers of new arrivals and reports changes to the FRG leader

TIME REQUIRED: Approximately 20 hours per month; one-year commitment

QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Ability to take accurate notes and keep records
- Well organized

RECOMMENDED TRAINING:

- Operation READY courses
- AFTB Levels I-III
- Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve)
- Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE:	FRG Treasurer
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Unit/Battalion FRG Leader and Commander
PURPOSE:	Serve as custodian for the FRG informal fund
JOB DESCRIPTION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Obtains appointment letter from the commander ▪ Prepares form SS4 and applies to the IRS for an employee ID number for the bank account ▪ Sets up fund records and ledger; keeps it up to date at all times ▪ Receives and counts all funds submitted from fundraisers; prepares deposit slips , and deposits funds to FRG fund account ▪ Disburses checks in accordance with FRG leader and commander's guidance ▪ Reviews monthly bank statements and reconciles with ledger; calls bank bookkeeper about any unexplained discrepancies ▪ Prepares monthly reports and presents them to FRG leader and commander; also reads summary aloud at FRG meetings
TIME REQUIRED:	Ten to twenty hours per month (depending on Activity frequency); one-year commitment
QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of banking procedures ▪ Good math skills ▪ Well organized ▪ Ability to work well with others
RECOMMENDED TRAINING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operation READY courses ▪ Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve) ▪ Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE:	Phone tree Committee Chairperson
RESPONSIBLE TO:	FRG Leader or Commander
PURPOSE:	Provide personal contact to keep FRG spouses informed
JOB DESCRIPTION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepares the unit telephone tree from the unit alert roster and information from first sergeant and FRG questionnaires ▪ Recruits and trains telephone points of contact (POC), at least one per platoon or, alternately, enough to assign 5-8 families each ▪ Assigns POCs to platoons or 5-8 family groups each ▪ Coordinates regularly with FRG leader and welcome committee chairperson, and updates phone tree with new families ▪ Supervises testing of the FRG phone tree at least monthly while troops are home and twice monthly while deployed ▪ Passes important information to POC's for families ▪ Fields calls from POC phone logs, reports, and volunteer time logs ▪ Prepares monthly reports and submits to FRG leader ▪ Maintains confidentiality, and discourages rumors and gossip ▪ Keeps a careful log of calls received, made, and their results
TIME REQUIRED:	Two to four hours per week: six-month commitment
QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good telephone/communication skills ▪ Knowledge of community resources and crisis intervention ▪ Concern and empathy for others; calm under stress
RECOMMENDED TRAINING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operation READY courses ▪ AFTB Levels I-III ▪ Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve) ▪ Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE:	Phone tree Point of Contact (POC)
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Phone tree Chairperson or FRG Leader
PURPOSE:	Gather and disseminate information
JOB DESCRIPTION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calls each of the assigned families on their POC phone tree branch; reports any discrepancies in the information on the list ▪ Passes important information to assigned families ▪ Telephone spouses occasionally when troops are in garrison and twice monthly during deployments ▪ Annotates the phone tree with any changes, and informs the phone tree chairperson or FRG leader ▪ Fields calls from assigned families, and answers questions or directs callers to appropriate resources; provide accurate, timely information ▪ Fields emergency calls and assists the families involved ▪ Welcomes new families assigned to the POC's phone tree branch ▪ Maintains confidentiality, discourages gossip, and dispels rumors ▪ Reports serious matters to phone tree chairperson or FRG leader ▪ Keeps a careful log of call received, made, and their results
TIME REQUIRED:	Two to six hours per week; six-month commitment
QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good telephone/communication skills ▪ Knowledge of community resources and crisis intervention ▪ Concern and empathy for others; calm under stress
RECOMMENDED TRAINING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operation READY courses ▪ AFTB Levels I-III ▪ Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve) ▪ Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE:	Battalion (or Unit) FRG Newsletter Editor
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Battalion (or unit) Commander and FRG Leader
PURPOSE:	Publishes the battalion (unit) FRG newsletter
JOB DESCRIPTION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determines ground rules for official newsletters ▪ Determines level of interest of FRG members in having a newsletter; discusses with FRG leader and commander ▪ Organizes a volunteer newsletter staff (reporters, writers, editors, typists, illustrators, collators, mailers) ▪ Designs newsletter and logo-gets input from members ▪ Oversees gathering of information from all sources; organizes, writes, and edits material ▪ Provides copies of draft newsletters to FRG leader and commander for editing ▪ After final editing, does layout and paste-up; submits camera-ready copy for reproduction
TIME REQUIRED:	Ten to twenty hours per month (depending on Newsletter frequency); one-year commitment
QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Editorial, spelling, grammar skills; ability to write articles ▪ Managerial skills; knowledge of organization ▪ Creativity, energy, artistic talent
RECOMMENDED TRAINING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orientation at Information System Branch ▪ Operation READY courses ▪ Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve) ▪ Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE: **FRG Special Events Committee Chairperson**

RESPONSIBLE TO: Unit FRG Leader

PURPOSE: Plan, organize, and execute FRG activities
And special events

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- Solicits FRG members' ideas and interests about fun events they would like the FRG to plan
- Discuss proposed events with FRG and unit leadership
- Recruits other volunteers to help with event details; checks the unit training schedule; agrees on date, location, etc.
- Establishes committees for the event and brainstorms needs
- Coordinates financial needs with FRG leadership, treasurer, and fundraiser chairperson
- Ensures that desired location is available the day of the event
- Coordinates with commander or first sergeant to arrange for single soldiers to help with decorations and other tasks
- Meets at intervals with committee chairpersons to ensure that all necessary preparations are in place

TIME REQUIRED: Ten to twenty hours per month (depending on Event frequency); six-month commitment

QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Enthusiasm and energy
- Positive leadership traits
- Good knowledge of recreational opportunities on post and elsewhere
- Organizational ability

RECOMMENDED TRAINING:

- Operation READY courses
- AFTB Levels I-III
- Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve)
- Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE: Hospitality/Sponsorship Committee Chairperson

RESPONSIBLE TO: Unit FRG Leader

PURPOSE: Welcome all new members and families

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- Keeps up with news of incoming families, newly married couples, new babies, single soldiers, illnesses, injuries, hospitalizations in the unit
- Calls new spouses and welcomes them to the unit; invites them to upcoming FRG events; provides an ACS welcome packet
- Gathers information on the number and ages of children in each family and their special interests
- Informs the FRG leader and phone tree committee chairperson of incoming families
- Ensures that new families have been assigned sponsors and phone tree POC's
- Sends flowers and cards to home or hospital as appropriate
- Attends unit/battalion planning meetings and FRG events

TIME REQUIRED: Three to five hours a week; six-month commitment

QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Enthusiastic people person
- Helpful and compassionate attitude
- Well organized

RECOMMENDED TRAINING:

- Operation READY Courses
- Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve)
- Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE:	FRG Publicity Committee Chairperson
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Unit/Battalion FRG Leader
PURPOSE:	Inform all soldiers and family members in the FRG of Activities (ongoing and upcoming)
JOB DESCRIPTION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinates with hospitality/welcome committee chairperson to learn of new families' addresses and phone numbers ▪ Informs new members of the purpose and structure of the FRG ▪ Coordinates with phone tree chairperson about the need for POC assistance with notifying families, with first sergeant to make sure soldiers are informed, and with newsletter chairperson ▪ Disseminates information about FRG events through phone tree POCs, newsletters, flyers, mailings, public announcements at meetings, unit bulletin boards
TIME REQUIRED:	Ten to twenty hours per month (depending on Activity frequency); one-year commitment
QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outgoing personality ▪ Ability to work well with others ▪ Good command of language ▪ Well organized
RECOMMENDED TRAINING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operation READY courses ▪ Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve) ▪ Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE:	Fundraiser Committee Chairperson
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Unit/Battalion FRG Leader and the Commander
PURPOSE:	Manage FRG fundraising activities
JOB DESCRIPTION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinates with FRG leader and special events coordinator on upcoming events and financial needs ▪ Coordinates with commander or first sergeant on training schedule and open times for fundraisers ▪ Canvasses membership about types of fundraisers desired ▪ Coordinates with commander about proposed fundraiser(s) ▪ Prepares fundraiser permission letter and delivers to FRG leader ▪ Works with publicity and phone tree chairpersons to get the word out about upcoming fundraisers ▪ Complies with Army regulations and post rules ▪ Works with fundraiser committee to plan the fundraiser ▪ Recruits volunteers and delegates to work ▪ Supervises the fundraiser on the appointed day ▪ Safeguards funds and turns them over to the treasurer or alternate as soon as practicable ▪ Reports fundraiser results to FRG leader and membership
TIME REQUIRED:	Ten hours per month; one-year commitment
QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of fundraising regulations ▪ Excellent leadership traits-works well with people
RECOMMENDED TRAINING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact the Financial Management Branch ▪ Operation READY Courses ▪ Environmental Health & Preventive Medicine ▪ Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve) ▪ Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE:	FRG Childcare Committee Chairperson
RESPONSIBLE TO:	FRG leader
PURPOSE:	Ensure acceptable childcare for FRG meetings and Special events
JOB DESCRIPTION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Makes acceptable arrangements for childcare during FRG meetings and special events ▪ Ensures that caregivers have received the required training prior to their employment ▪ Ensures that an adequate number of caregivers are on hand for the numbers and ages of children present ▪ Ensures on-site adult supervision at all times during the parents' absence ▪ Provides actual spot checks on the childcare providers used for meetings and special events ▪ Ensures that the childcare facility meets post safety and sanitation standards before use ▪ Ensures activities (VCR tapes, coloring books, and organized games) are appropriate for the children they are providing to ▪ Pays caregivers when applicable
TIME REQUIRED:	Approximately one day per month for meetings, Preparation, and actual events; one-year commitment
QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Willingness to develop a working knowledge of the unit's Family Readiness Plan ▪ Interest or experience in the FRG program ▪ Well organized
RECOMMENDED TRAINING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operation READY courses ▪ Attend Family Program Academy (Guard and Reserve) ▪ Similar courses and/or past experience

POSITION TITLE: Chairperson

RESPONSIBLE TO: Unit Commander

GENERAL STATEMENT: The chairperson of a Family Readiness Group within the Army National Guard is the leader of the group and its spokesperson. The chairperson presides at FRG meetings and maintains regular communication with the affiliated organization's commander or authorized unit Point of Contact (POC) to keep participating families informed of unit activities and policies. She or he also communicates regularly with the State Family Program Coordinator and the State Volunteer Representative on plans for FRG activities, family member concerns, and requests for assistance.

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- Plans and conducts FRG activities that support family well being and preparedness of the unit, consistent with the goals of the State Family Program
- Keeps the affiliated unit informed of FRG activities
- Keeps information flowing between family members, the unit, and the State Family Program Office
- Presides over FRG meetings, which are held as needed
- Meets annually with other chairpersons throughout the state to share ideas
- Helps identify volunteer spouses for local projects
- Encourages family members to become active FRG participants

TIME REQUIRED: Approximately 6 to 8 hours per month, depending on Level of FRG activity; one-year duration (renewable)

IN-SERVICE TRAINING: One annual training workshop at government expense

COMPENSATION: No pay; reimbursement available for use of private Vehicle while on FRG business

QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Must believe in and support the National Guard Family Program
- Must have a family member in the National Guard
- Must have good listening skills
- Must like to help people
- Must enjoy being with other National Guard family members
- Must be able to organize others

POSITION TITLE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must be able to communicate with and on behalf of the families and the unit Family Sponsorship Coordinator
RESPONSIBLE TO:	FRG Leader
PURPOSE:	Organize and maintains communication link between The FRG and new family members of the unit
JOB DESCRIPTION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepares welcome packets to alleviate the stresses associated with relocation and joining a “new” family ▪ Coordinates with family readiness liaison and unit administrator to obtain the names and phone numbers of newly assigned personnel and makes contact ▪ Matches each incoming family with an existing family for mutual support and assistance ▪ Notifies the FRG leader of any particular family problems or needs that are identified through conversation or during a visit so the FRG can be of assistance ▪ Adds new family members (including newly married spouses) to the phone tree and newsletter mailing list
TIME REQUIRED:	Approximately two days per month
IN-SERVICE TRAINING:	Unit orientation and attendance at a Family Program Academy; other training will be offered as the Budget allows
QUALIFICATIONS & SPECIAL SKILLS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Willingness to develop a working knowledge of the unit’s Family Readiness Plan ▪ Interest or experience in the FRG program

Military Family Program Action Officer (FPAO)

Position Title:

Unit Military Family Program Action Officer

General Statement:

The Military Family Program Action Officer (FPAO) for the unit Family Readiness Group is a Guard member, appointed by the commander. The FPAO is the primary link between the group family member chain of concern and the military leadership. Based on the guidelines to the unit Commander, the FPAO works together with the appointed unit volunteer coordinator to ensure a unit Family Readiness Group that will increase the preparedness and wellness of the unit's total guard family (guard members, family members, retirees, youth, community agencies/resources, etc.)

Accountability and Supervision:

Senior Command/Unit Commander

Duties:

- Serves as a liaison between the Commander and the unit Volunteer Coordinator
- Supports and coordinates military assistance for Family Program activities (I.e. annual family briefings, holiday and post AT meetings, etc.)
- Keeps the Volunteer Coordinator informed and updated regarding unit training. Schedules and events that have an impact on families. Includes the Family Readiness Group on staff meeting agendas
- Advises commander and unit personnel of Family Readiness Group needs and activities
- Coordinates the use of facilities, transportation, and administrative supplies by the Volunteer Coordinator. Supplies include, but are not limited to, computers, and photocopy machines, phones and mailing privileges
- Participate in regional/state level State Family Program training activities
- Provides guidance for volunteers regarding military procedures and regulations
- Provides unit volunteer coordinator with a unit roster and information affecting families; assists the coordinator in completion and updating of family member information; use with developing communication; (within guidelines of primacy act), including current telephone/email trees, newsletter, etc.
- Coordinates a minimum of one annual family briefing. Primary purpose of the briefing is to provide families with essential information about the unit, it's mission, family benefits, and the unit Family Readiness Group
- Coordinate with other FPAOs within the chain of command
- Develop a chain of command resource team to assist families in case of crisis/emergency; team includes as a minimum; servicing JAG and Chaplain, the local employer support of the guard and reserve representative, local active duty Family Services (if available), and helpful community agencies (Red Cross, VA, Community Mental Health, etc.)

Qualification Requirements:

- Ability to communicate effectively and empathetically with family members
- Must have a practical knowledge of the Michigan Army National Guard and resources, including its State Family Program
- Willing to support the unit Family Readiness Group; recognizes the contribution family member volunteers make to unit readiness and wellness
- Ability to interpret and implement regulations and directives
- Must have access to the commander in order to effectively support the issues/concerns affecting unit families and the Family Readiness Group

APPENDIX C

FAMILY READINESS ACTIVITIES QUARTERLY REPORT

Unit Summary

Unit:	Quarter:
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1. Activities

i. Type of Activity: Highlights –

ii. Brief Description of Activities: Summary –

iii. Number of individuals trained in connection with Activities:

Volunteers: ____ Military Members: ____ Community Members: ____ Other: ____

*** Activities include meetings, staff visits, breakfasts /lunches, receptions, soldier/airman processing etc.**

**** Please include number of times each activity was held during the quarter.**

2. Training

i. Type of Training: Highlights

ii. Brief Description of Training Events: Summary –

.

iii. Number of individuals trained in connection with Training:

Volunteers: ____ Military Members: ____ Community Members: ____ Other: ____

***Training includes briefings, conferences, SFPC training, etc.**

**** Please include number of times each training event was held during the quarter.**

3. Volunteer Training

i. Type of Training: Highlights

ii. Brief Description of Training Events: Summary -

iii. Number of individuals trained in connection with Volunteer Training:

Volunteers: ____ Military Members: ____ Community Members: ____ Other:

**Training includes briefings, conferences, SFPC training, etc.*

*** Please include number of times each training event was held during the quarter*

4. Workshops

i. Type of Workshops: Highlights -

ii. Brief Description of Workshop Events: Summary -

iii. Number of individuals trained in connection with Workshops:

Volunteers: ____ Military Members: ____ Community Members: ____ Other:

**Training includes briefings, conferences, SFPC training, etc.*

*** Please include number of times each training event was held during the quarter*

5. Family Assistance Centers (FACs):

a. Number of active FACs: ____

b. Number of proposed FACs: ____ /Date of proposed FAC(s):

c. Number of FACs on standby: ____

6. Does your unit have any of the following events scheduled during this Quarter? Please fill out the training matrix quarterly. Also, keep in mind that only training taking place during reported quarter should be noted on this matrix (i.e. – If it is the 2nd Qtr, don't report a deployment that takes place the 3rd Qtr.)

Type of Training	Place of Training/ Deployment	# of Unit(s))	Number of Personne I Involved	Beginning & End Date of Each Event	Indicate: Air/Army
Annual Training					
Mobilizations (SFOR, KFOR, SWA)					

National Training Center (NTC)					
Overseas Deployments (Other than AT)					
Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC)					
Special Deployments (SAD for Natural Disasters)					
Within State Mobilizations (Airport Security)					

7. Please list FUTURE deployments each quarter. Please fill out this training matrix quarterly. Also, keep in mind that only training taking place after this quarter should be noted on this matrix (i.e. – If it is the 2nd Qtr, report a deployment that takes place the 3rd and 4th Qtr.)

Type of Training	Place of Training/ Deployment	# of Unit(s))	Number of Personnel Involved	Beginning & End Date of Each Event	Indicate: Air/Army
Annual Training					
Mobilizations (SFOR, KFOR, SWA)					
National Training Center (NTC)					
Overseas Deployments (Other than AT)					
Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC)					
Special Deployments (SAD for Natural Disasters)					
Within State Mobilizations (Airport Security)					

8. How is your Unit promoting their Family Program? (Please provide in a list format)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.
- i.

9. How could Michigan's Family Program be improved? **(Please provide in list format)**

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.

10. What can be done at the NGB to assist your Unit's Family Program? **(Please provide in list format)**

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.
- i.

11. Comments and other information:

APPENDIX D

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

For use of this form, see AR 608-1; the proponent agency is DCSPER

I desire to volunteer my services to the _____

Program at _____

(Installation/Community; Unit)

I expressly agree that my services are being performed as a volunteer and that I am not, solely because of these services, an employee of the United States Government or any instrumentality thereof except for certain purposes relating to tort claims and workman's compensation coverage with regard to incidents occurring during the performance of approved volunteer services. I expressly agree that I expect no present or future salary, wages, or related benefits as payment for these volunteer services. I agree to participate in whatever training that may be required in order for me to perform the work for which I am volunteering.

TYPED/PRINTED NAME OF VOLUNTEER

SIGNATURE
DATE

OF

VOLUNTEER

ACCEPTED:

TYPED/PRINTED NAME OF ACCEPTING OFFICIAL

SIGNATURE
DATE

OF

ACCEPTING

OFFICIAL

EDITION OF JUL 78 IS OBSOLETE

RCAS V1.0

DA FORM 4712-R, DEC 87

APPENDIX E

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTERS

FACS	POC	PHONE	COUNTIES
Ishpeming Armory 900 Palms Ave	MIKE FRASER	906-486-9181 FAX: 906-486-4946	Gogebic, Ontonagon, Houghton, Keweenaw, Iron, Baraga, Dickinson, Marquette, Delta and Menominee
Sault Ste Marie Armory, 1170 E. Portage Rd.	JERRY MCDONALD	906-632-7861 FAX: 906-632-4753	Alger, Schoolcraft, Luce, Mackinac, and Chippewa
Camp Grayling Armory, Bldg 3	JACK RASMUSSEN	989-344-6143 FAX: 989-344-6140	Emmet, Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Charlevoix, Antrim, Otsego, Montmorency, Alpena, Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Crawford, Oscoda, Alcona, Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, Roscommon, Ogemaw, and Iosco
Midland Armory 2300 E. Airport Rd. Midland, Mi	NICOLE ADDISON	989-835-8543 FAX: 989-835-1039	Clare, Gladwin, Arenac, Isabella, Midland, Bay, Gratiot, Saginaw, Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac, Genesee
Marshall St Armory 300 Elvin Ct. Lansing, MI	VICKI THOMPSON	517-334-6886 FAX: 517-334-6894	Clinton, Shiawassee, Eaton, Ingham, Livingston, Calhoun, Jackson, Branch, Hillsdale,
Grand Valley Armory 1200 44 th St SW Wyoming, MI	RANDY REDBURN	616-249-2724 FAX: 616-249-2740	Mason, Lake, Osceola, Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Muskegon, Montcalm,, Ottawa, Ionia, Kent, Allegan, Barry, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, St Joseph, Cass and Berrien
Taylor Armory 12450 Beech Daly Taylor, MI	TAMI KOZLOWSKI	734-946-0793 FAX: 734-946-0699	Lapeer, Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, Wayne

FACs service the families living in the counties indicated, regardless what unit their sponsor is serving with.